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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000115

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SUBJECT: FADILLAH LEADERS VISIT BASRAH

REF: BAGHDAD 2373

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CLASSIFIED BY: Ken Gross, Regional Coordinator, REO Basrah,  
Department of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (U) Summary: On July 6, a delegation of Fadillah members from Baghdad visited the Regional Embassy Office (REO) and met with the Regional Coordinator (RC). The discussion centered on the broad topics of security in Basrah, particularly on militias and their infiltration of the Iraqi Police Services (IPS), and border and detainee concerns. The Fadillah's leaders' fact-finding mission was just that, and the discussion focused on their expressions of general concerns without any clear suggestions on how to pull Basrah out of its security morass. End summary.

¶2. (U) On July 6, leaders of the Fadillah party from Baghdad and Basrah visited the REO to meet with the RC. The Fadillah delegation included Nadeem al-Jabiri, the head of the Fadillah Party parliamentary bloc, Hashim al-Hashimi, former Minister of Oil, Abdul Kareem al-Yacoubi, Uday Nafe'ah, Abdul Razul Jamua'ah, Ayad Kadum, Aquil Talib, Basrah Provincial Council member and Dr. Jamal Abud al-Zahra, head of the Fadillah party in Basrah. Al-Jabiri told the RC that the delegation came to Basrah to discuss the current security situation and to work on a solution to Basrah's many problems. He said that he intended to form a permanent committee to put the spotlight on the issues in Basrah and to follow up on suggested remedies. Al-Jabiri noted that he had met recently with Ambassador Khalilzad in Baghdad and had discussed Basrah's dismal security environment with him (reftel).

#### SECURITY IN BASRAH

¶3. (C) The RC brought up the part that the IPS plays in the security dilemma and how they must become part of the solution, and al-Jabiri agreed. He told the RC that the problem was rooted in how IPS members were first hired. Al-Jabiri criticized the militia infiltration in the IPS and noted the conundrum involved in cleansing the IPS since disbanding the force is not an option. He said that he had heard complaints from the IPS that they were hindered in performing their duties because of too much interference from political parties and the tribes. Al-Jabiri said that the central government, Coalition Forces and local government all should work together and be responsible for resolving this issue. He also said Coalition Forces could assist the IPS by providing it with better training and more advanced weaponry.

¶4. (C) Abdul Kareem al-Yacoubi chimed in and said that the best way to get rid of militias was to offer their members (and others) better employment opportunities. He cited two facts

that lead to the proliferation of militias: chronic unemployment and the need to form groups for better self-protection. Job creation and offering a better way of life would decrease the number of militia members, jump-start the economy and result in a decrease in terrorism, he said. He urged that new initiatives and ideas be developed to combat the scourge of militias so prevalent in Iraq today.

#### CONTROL OF BORDERS AND DETAINEES

15. (C) The delegation also raised problems with control of the borders and detainees. Al-Jabiri believes that one of the major problems in Basrah is the lack of secure borders with its neighbors and urged that more pressure be put on the countries bordering Iraq. He added that smuggling was leading to an increased number of weapons in Iraq and the movement of "undesirables" into Iraq. Al-Jabiri said that Coalition Forces could assist in securing the borders by increasing their presence along the borders.

16. (C) Turning to the detainee issue, al-Jabiri told the RC that he has discussed this issue with the Ambassador on numerous occasions. He said that Coalition Forces have made mistakes because of cultural differences and believed that the presence of Coalition Forces in Basrah should be reorganized. (Note: he did not elaborate on how this should be done. End Note.) Al-Jabiri insisted that detainees being held without charges or just cause should be culled from the prison rolls and released immediately. He referred to recent protests held outside of the British gate of the Basrah Palace compound and stressed how this problem affected so many families throughout Iraq.

#### COMMENT

17. (C) Comment: Though the discussion was general in nature, al-Jabiri and his colleagues seemed genuinely concerned with the many problems facing Basrah. However, it did not touch on the controversy surrounding Basrah's Fadillah governor, Mohammad al-Wa'eli, the dysfunctional provincial council, or the failure

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of the current security plan for Basrah. Al-Jabiri did not offer any concrete suggestions to resolve security concerns and did not offer any hints as to what plans Baghdad may have in the works. In closing, he said he would recommend that the RC join a committee to work on improving security in Basrah. End comment.  
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